Dear Jim, 2/24/76

Except for last-minute silliness my Playboy job is over, I hope. It hasbeen a hassle, a challenge and a futility comibined. To say nothing of the incredible stupidity of everything, from concept to execution. They have wasted enough on this one project for me to print several books - and done even what they wanted to do less well than could have been done more easily.

I don't know whether they will want me to help on the coming piece, on King, a rewrite of a piece done a year ago. I've told the bottom, a very nice woman, to work it up the totem that if they want me to I will if I know specifically at the outset how much time they will take, what they will pay for it and whether they are again stealing my work. In the one just ending, now four days past press time and just going into page, they stole generously and not uncommonly attribute my work to others. Not a pleasant situation. They actually say they are within the law in doing it, that their lawyers have told them so. I told them I'm not their lawyers, take a different view and expect to be paid. I've told them I don't want to tsue but they are wealthy and I am sure the law is my way because they have a history they don't know on this. I'll not be surprised if I'm paid something. The concepts of ethics today!

The real reason I write in this in-between few minutes - it is a nice day and as soon as Lil is up and I have the vitamins she feeds me with an orange for breakfast I'm going for a walk, then back to writing - is because I fear you may think my reaction to your suggestion that the pressures are getting too great is a bit cavalier. To the degree I can assess myself I still believe as I said. As I told you, I was aware of the possible consequences of all these years of pressure, was and am, if in some cases belatedly, of the consequences of some of the earlier problems, and did take steps locally, outside the GHA stonewall, for consultations and perhaps guidance. The problems boil down to my inability to pay a shrink and the overload at the local clinic. But I have, with regularity, reminded them of my request, the last time not too long before you wrote. I may have once since, I don t recall.Anyway, yesterday I did get a call, there is one who now has a little time, and I'll see him the afternoon of the 4th.

There is an added problem for me in this kind of thing. I do tend to analyze anything that seems to be of consequence. My record is one of more than average accuracy and foresight. This can easily tend to make me overconfident, over-certain. But with the medical I have, in every case, been right. After even the third check on my eyes by GHA I knew the prescription was still wrong. I can now, beginning yesterday, see much better typing and reading this small type. On the phlbus the same. I knew something was wrong that I'd not been told. I was right. In fact, just yesterday, when I had the bi-weekly blood test I asked that it also be phoned to the local doctor. His nurse called me with the report that it isn't what he'd like it to be but he'll hold off on changing the dosage for another test. GHA didn't call to give me the results. They do not know I've gone to this local man (if the bureaucracy reported they know I've seen the vascular man). They did not call with results and instructions. In two weeks they have not gotten from the medical records all accessible what the vascular man asked for. Yesterday morning, after the mail, he had not received it. His office happens to be next to the lab.

The furnace cleaner has come for the annual cleaning so I'll wait until he leaves for the walk. Lil is abed later than usual. She's not going to work this a.m.I'll get the paper and leave the mail when I walk. So a little more. I'm making good progress on the writing but none on getting a typist I can now pay for with the Playboy money, which will also have other uses, from restoring the escrow account for reprints to getting Lil a new typewriter. (We haven t had time to tall but my estimate is that we've recovered maybe 40% of the manufacturing costbof Post Mortem, rather encouraging since it is carrying itself, having had not a single review of news story saying how it can be obtained.

I'm eliminating - I think and hope - much in The King Conspiracies, working title. I'm trying to make it read like fiction, trying to simplify while still being definitive. I'm also finding that providing what seems to be sufficient detail on those matters I address is consistently taking more space than I expected. I've had to break the second

or third consecutive chapter into two. I'm well into the tenth, the last of the first part. I'm hoping it will be a good one. I'm putting together the actual story of Judge Battle's mysterious death. I had it done earlier but Bud chickened. Well, putting it this way may be a little unfair to him. He feared that in Memphis it could backfire. In his yellow mind this could have been a libaility. Our being there was all the liability needed. So, the work remains my literary property and I'm working a separate chapter in on the chance it can have a separate literary life. I have a friend who is a TV production manager. He thinks the plot can make a movie.

After this chapter is done I'll go back over two not or partly done, depending on whether my Newsday friend can come tomorrow (I'll have to leave Thursday to work in DC, either with Jim or at Justice, which is supposedly delivering new data) and how much farthur, if any, he has gone. I've laid one of the Foreman chapters aside to be able to listen to my tapes of interviews on Foreman. The phrasing outside of court was better than inside and I think it will be much better. My interview with John Ray in the bowels of Leavenworth, with Jerry in a rundown St. Louis hotel the morning after he was on the town, when still a little hung over. With two prisoners inside Brushy Mt. pen Jimmy found for me, describing what happened when they called the jailors mother-fuckers and nobody had left the cell that remains bugged. I think it will impart more of a sense of realizm.

There is so much overlapping I think it is turning out to be better that I've postponed correcting the draft to get more on paper. Without a typist my original idea was in case I am again hospitalized. I can read when I can't type. Now I think it will be better because I'll be able to decide wjether shifting is needed and if there is enough continuity, etc. The structure enables me to tell the story while dealing with it in terms of the major characters, like a dramatis personnae but still telling the story through each one in order.

While I have enough for the last part, the "new evidence," I expect more. I also expect more stonewalling and time-wasting, so I think I'll be able to keep working full tilt until I have a better notion of what to expect and not to expect. The feds have a problem and have not yet worked it out. The problem has three parts: me, what it will mean if they deliver, and what can happen in court. I have a hunch they ll try to stall until after the appeals hearing if not ruling in the new spectro suit. We've moved to expedite.

I don't suppose you use batteries in your tape recorders. However, I've learned something if you do. The new rachargeables are supposed to be pretty good. Mallory says they will take 100 recharges. The cost is not much greater than that of alkalines now. And recharges with a trickle effect built in are now available. So, no worry about overcharging, which ruined the earlier ones.

Hope you're not caught the flu. It is epidemic here. Some schools have 60-70% of kids out. College infirmary is having to discharge prematurely to make room for new cases. We are having an exceptionally mild February, generally a month of severe winter. Last two weeks used only 32 gallons of fuel oil without using fireplace. But I think this helps the bug. Being away from people is thus good.

Best,